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ELECTRICAL PERMITS AND WIRING OF MULTI-FAMILY DWELLINGS

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To All Electrical Contractors Doing Work in the City of Saint Paul:

An ongoing problem with the method we have always accepted for electrical permits in multi-family buildings has forced us to change the way permits will have to be taken for these buildings.

Starting immediately, on a multi-family building **where the units are individually owned**, a permit per unit plus one for the base building will have to be taken. The individual unit permits must indicate a number or other such identifier for the unit. This will include condominiums, townhomes and other such structures where a person actually owns their unit. This should make no difference in the fees, since a minimum multi-family electrical permit is \$48.50, and a unit with only 5 circuits would be more than the minimum. This does not limit the permit to 5 circuits, it still must be taken for the full number of circuits in the unit. The base building permit would cover the main service, common areas, feeders to the units, etc. if applicable.

If a structure will be rental, such as apartments, a single permit per building will still be acceptable.

We understand that this will cause more paperwork for your permit person, but it is necessary in order to serve the final customer- the owners of the units. Some lenders are requiring a finalized permit in order to complete the sale, and with one permit covering the whole building this is not possible.

Also, we are encountering problems with the services for "townhouses" or "rowhouses" or similar where the units are sold individually and the property owner owns not only the unit but the ground underneath and possibly front and back yards. These are also sometimes called zero-lot-line townhomes.

The problem we are encountering is that many times with these developments, the plans call for a multiple meter bank fed by a single service on one end of the building. From this meter pack, individual feeders are run through the attics of the units to feed each individual unit. This means that you are running a feeder for one unit through someone else's property. If there is any trouble with this feeder, the problem may actually be in another person's "house". Also, since these are individual "buildings", according to Section 225.31 a disconnecting means would have to be installed at the "entrance" to each "building" the feeder passed through.

To summarize: If you are wiring a multiple-unit rowhouse, townhouse or similar where the unit owner owns not only the structure but also the ground underneath and the attic area above, separate services from the utility will have to be run to each unit. If this same type of structure is being built with the unit owner owning only what's "inside the paint", then a single service with feeders to each unit is acceptable.

If you have any questions or concerns on this, please contact us early in the process. Do not wait until the job is well along and then ask if your plans are acceptable.